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A recent report in the Seattle Times revealed that several Washington lawmakers are in the business of doing favors for campaign contributors and raising money at the expense of the Navy and Coast Guard.

According to the article, Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wa.), Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wa.), and Rep. Brian Baird (D-Wa.) are responsible for both funneling \$17.65 to a small boat company in Washington State and forcing the Navy and Coast Guard to buy boats for which they had no use, and this has been going on for years.

In 1999, Reps. Dicks and Baird added a line to the Defense appropriations bill to requiring the Navy to purchase a \$4 million dollar high speed boat from Guardian Marine, a small maritime manufacturer. The Navy had no use for it then and, not surprisingly; this boat has never been used in a combat role.

In 2002, Sen. Murray added a \$4.65 million earmark in the Defense Appropriations bill and forced the Coast Guard to buy a boat that was "Currently-developed 85-foot fast patrol craft that is manufactured in the United States", you guessed it...Guardian Marine was the only manufacturer of such a craft. Subsequently, the Coast Guard evaluated the boat several times and determined that it would not be useful as their mission changed after 9/11.

Once again, in 2002, the article reports that plans by Sen. Murray and Reps. Dicks and Baird were under way to have the Navy buy two boats, one being in the experimental stage, called the 'Sealion'. The two boats combined were worth \$8.4 million. However, even before the prototypes of these ships were completed, the navy determined they were unnecessary. Attempts were made to give the Ships to the University of Washington, but they didn't want them either. Until recently, they sat unused and are now sitting at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Seattle.

If they hadn't learned their lesson, in 2004, Sen. Murray, Reps. Dicks and Baird cosponsored an earmark worth \$4.5 million for a fourth boat. It was designed for torpedo retrieval at the Naval Base in Keyport, Washington. It has since been reassigned to a base in California for evaluation.

These Members of Congress have kept Guardian Marine in business since the 1990's, thanks to taxpayer dollars. I bet you didn't know that your tax dollars were being used to keep a company in business. What's more is that in the past 4 years, executives of Guardian Marine and their subcontractors have made \$125,000 in campaign contributions to Congress members.